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ABSTRACT

This project did the planning and pilot phases of an effort to improve the teaching of human relations in grades K-12 of public and private schools in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metropolitan area. In the pilot phase, the project furnished on-the-job training for approximately 70 schools. The training was given by teams of human relations specialists working full-time for periods of 2 and 3 weeks in selected urban, suburban, and semirural schools. In such schools they provided group activities, conducted demonstration lessons, wrote curriculum materials, suggested teaching methods, helped teachers plan, observed teachers, and promoted human relations as a crucial and integral part of the curriculum. Evaluators of the project feel that the participants increased their awareness of the importance of human relations in their classrooms and in their attitudes toward student behavior. (JB)

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

HUMAN RELATIONS EDUCATION PROJECT

Buffalo Board of Education
City Hall
Buffalo, New York

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I. Summary of Findings

There were three separate evaluation activities related to the Human Relations Project. The nature of these activities are found in Section IV, Analyzing the Data. The following represents a summary of the findings of these activities.

It was felt that the Human Relations Education Project did a good job in the schools of Erie and Niagara Counties, New York. The project was very effective in disseminating H.R. information and in the consequent development of interest in the field of H.R. education. Community support and involvement has been developed through countless presentations before various religious, educational, and social groups throughout the two-county area. Informal cooperation with regional institutions of higher education have led to a limited involvement of the H.R. staff in the pre-service training of teachers at these institutions. Many teachers in the public and private schools of the two-county area have been provided with new insights for the difficult task of changing attitudes and behavior of students and other professional educators with regard to racial, religious, ethnic and socio-economic stereotypes. Evaluators concluded that the H.R. Project demonstrated its potential and was achieving good results among schools in the Erie and Niagara

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County region.

II. Statement of the Problem

This study proposed planning and pilot phases of a project to improve the teaching of H.R. in grades K-12 of the public and private schools in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Area and later, it is hoped, throughout the Western New York area.

In its pilot phase, the project provided on-the-job training for approximately 1500 teachers in approximately 70 schools. This training was given by teams of H.R. specialist-teachers who spent full-time for periods of 2 and 3 weeks in selected urban, suburban, and semi-rural schools. In these schools they provided group activities, conduction demonstration lessons, provided curriculum materials, suggested teaching methods, helped teachers plan, observed teachers, and used methods, to promote human relations education as a vital and integral part of the curriculum in all grades.

The pilot phase tested the effectiveness of such teams of specialist-teachers as a method of promoting a basic, desirable, and important curriculum change over a large metropolitan area and its surrounding region.

This study was based on the belief that substantial improvements could be brought about in H.R. education if teachers are made aware of the importance of good human relations as a basic teaching goal and of the wealth of knowledge, materials, and techniques available for achieving it.

It was felt that teacher awareness and understanding could be enhanced by developing the following teacher needs:

1. More understanding of the needs, values and attitudes of individuals from other groups and social strata.

2. More understanding of their own values, attitudes, feelings and personality and the effects of these on their students.

3. More knowledge about the types of resource material that are available and how to use them to effectively promote better human relations and changes of attitudes among students.

4. More understanding of the individual and how he relates to the group.

III. Attacking the Problem

1. Number and nature of the subjects. The total region includes 107 school districts, 8 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, the schools of the Diocese of Buffalo, the major cultural organizations of the region, and 15 institutions of higher education. During the period that the project was in operation, 200 schools K-12, 200 principals, and approximately 3000 teachers participated in the project.

2. The activities employed. The following major activities were employed over a three-year period by the Human Relations Project:

(a) 32 teachers from 18 school districts met every Saturday for a year to

research materials and share ideas. They tested these ideas in their own classrooms and eventually produced a Human Relations Guidebook to Learning Activities that contained suggested lesson plans for all grade levels.

(b) The staff also produced an annotated bibliography and supplements during the second and third years of operation. Additional lesson plans and instructional guides were produced by the staff during the second and third years. An extensive annotated listing of inductive techniques for affective learning experiences was also produced and updated.

The Project visited over 200 schools in 32 Western New York school districts, providing demonstrations for over 2500 classroom teachers. The staff also gave demonstrations for PTA's and parent groups in every community where they worked.

(c) During the past year the Project staff has provided training for pre-service practice at the following area teacher-training institutions: State University College at Buffalo, State University of New York at Buffalo, Canisius College, D'Youville College, Rosary Hill College, Medaille College, Villa Maria and Niagara University.

(d) Two separate demonstrations were given for State Education Department personnel and for Title III Regional Centers at Elmira, New Paltz, Albany (Guilderland), Suffolk County, Westchester County and Verona.

(e) Saturday workshops were held for ten weeks in Buffalo, three weeks in the Rochester area and two weeks in Niagara Falls. Many one-day workshops were also held.

(f) The Project was able to provide national dissemination of its work through various conferences and conventions. The Project was on the program of the national A.S.C.D. convention for two years, 1969 in Chicago and 1970 in San Francisco. In April of 1970, staff members were also on the program of a regional conference in Minneapolis sponsored by the Secondary Education Council of A.S.C.D.

(g) The Project has also been on the program of the New York State A.S.C.D. for several years.

3. Collection of Data. There were three methods employed to collect data: (1) questionnaires were developed to measure the opinions of teacher and building principal participants; (2) a Semantic Differential instrument was developed specifically for use in the H.R. project. Administered to the teacher participants, the S.D. was given to two distinct groups of teachers. One group participated in a pre-post testing activity and the other group took only a post-test. (3) An evaluation team consisting of a chief school officer (non-participating district), a curriculum specialist, a university professor, and a teacher made on-site visitations and carried out the following data collecting activities:

(a) Each member of the team was asked to visit a school district and to use an interview technique to acquire data. Principals and teachers from the receiving schools participating in the H.R. project were interviewed. In addition, students participating in the H.R. program were also interviewed.

(b) In the afternoon two members of the evaluation team visited the offices of the H.R. project to interview members of the H.R. team. Other evaluation team members telephoned principals and teachers from a participating school other than the one they visited in the morning.

IV. Analyzing the Data

1. Hypotheses. Hypotheses were not stated in a classical manner. Rather, statements of accomplishment or major emphasis were made with regard to successfully meeting the specifically stated objectives. The following major objectives were stated:

(a) Teachers will assert increased awareness of the importance of human relations in their own lives and the lives of their students.

(b) Teachers will demonstrate increased knowledge and information about H.R. education.

(c) Teachers will increase emphasis in their own classroom planning on those teaching goals related to good H.R.

(d) Teachers will use more and different teaching materials specifically designed and recommended for the promotion of good H.R.

(e) Teachers will introduce changes in their teaching methods based on good H.R. teaching practices suggested by the specialists.

The following statements of emphasis were made in terms of the objectives:

E_1 The project will test, for the first time, a method of in-service education using full time traveling teams of teacher-specialists who work in urban, suburban and rural, public and parochial schools in many regional school districts.

E_2 The project will provide promise as a model for bringing about substantial changes in the curriculum for large numbers of pupils and teachers over an entire region.

E_3 The project will successfully alter teacher attitudes toward H.R.

E_4 The project will carry out a procedure of close curriculum cooperation among city and suburban, public and private schools that is unprecedented in the region.

2. Techniques used to handle data. Three methods of data collection were defined previously: (1) The teacher and principal questionnaire data were tabulated and placed on an evaluation summary sheet. Results were reported by using a Yes-No scale with regard to the techniques (activities) carried out by the H.R. visiting teams. Frequency counts were used to indicate

the degree of acceptance by teachers and principals among the various techniques used.

(2) The Semantic Differential analysis was carried out using two multivariate analysis of variance models with unequal cell entries. The first multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) contrasted the two groups of teachers on the 14 S.D. concepts with the 12 S.D. scales as independent (2 x 14; 12 variables) variables. The second MANOVA contrasted the two groups on the 12 S.D. scales with the 14 S.D. concepts as independent (2 x 12; 14 variables) variables.

The data were subjected to three statistical tests: (1) a multivariate F test, (2) Univariate F ratios, and (3) factor analysis. The .05 level of confidence was accepted as significant. The data were reported in statistical tables.

(3) The evaluation team members convened at the offices of the Western New York School Development Council for purposes of reporting their interview findings. The interview questions were derived from the H.R. project stated objectives. A tape recorder was utilized to record the reporting session. The content of the taped report was summarized in a final report and submitted to the H.R. Project Director.

V. Findings

1. The questionnaire and anecdotal responses of teachers and administrators are overwhelmingly favorable in the region.

2. The following evaluative statements were made by the field evaluation team:

(a) The evaluators were unanimous in their opinion that the Human Relations Education Project was doing a good job in the schools of Erie and Niagara Counties. The project has been very effective in the dissemination of information and the consequent development of interest in the field of human relations education. Community support and involvement has been developed through countless presentations before Parent-Teacher Associations, church groups, service clubs, conferences, and radio and TV by the project staff. Informal cooperation with area colleges and universities has involved the project in the pre-service training of teachers on a limited basis. The work in schools has provided great numbers of teachers with new insights for the difficult task of changing attitudes and behavior.

(b) Evaluation members were unanimous in their praise for the general application of Human Relations techniques through the project. They feel the project is demonstrating its potential and achieving good results.

(c) Teachers in receiving schools felt that they were exposed to new materials and methods of teaching H.R. Most important was the fact that they were able to observe this in actual operation.

(d) There was greater acceptance and positive reaction to the H.R. visitation among schools where the H.R. team was visiting for the second year. There was no distrust shown or stereotypes developed regarding the H.R. effort and supposed relationships to bussing, teaching black history, and segregation, as there were in some cases in the previous year.

(e) The H.R. evaluation team was extravagant in its praise for the professional teaching competence of the H.R. staff. They felt that an extremely good job was done by the H.R. administrative staff in selection of H.R. teachers. Receiving school personnel were also extremely liberal in their praise for the visiting H.R. teams.

3. The extensive Semantic Differential analyses (1968-69, 1969-70), with regard to evaluating overall attitudinal change in teachers participating in the H.R. Project, were summarized in the following manner:

Semantic Differential Test I (1968-69)

(a) Although most of the multivariate tests of main effects were highly significant, the analyses tell nothing about what causes these differences were.

(b) Although there very well may be cause and effect relationships due to the training, these analyses indicate only possibilities and not definitive conclusions. Yet even though there were certain failures on the part of the HREP staff to exercise the necessary controls in the data collection process, this author believes that the training program did result in significant gains in attitude being made.

Semantic Differential Test II (1969-70)

(a) Significant differences were detected between the pretest and post-test measurements of attitudes toward the teaching of H.R. However, caution should be expressed since an appropriate control group was not used. Several sources of experimental invalidity were apparent with the design utilized, although none yielded plausible explanations of the results when the findings of previous research are examined. The inservice training program probably produced the change in attitudes.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Outcomes

See I. Summary

2. Features of Original Plan Dropped or Modified:

The task of "improving the teaching of Human Ralations as an integral part of K-12 curriculum" was first approached from the viewpoint of black-white relations. However, as the project staff became more knowledgable in the problems of human relations in education, they became aware of the need to deal with the problem from a broader base. The improvement of communications, of self-concept, interpersonal relations and the whole environment of the teaching-learning situation, were basic to the improvement of intergroup understanding. The staff became interested and skillful in the use of inductive teaching techniques that dealt with feelings, values and attitudes. They saw a need to humanize the school and the curriculum as a first step toward improving human understanding, especially black-white understanding, in the classroom.

The use of traveling teams of in-service specialists who provided full time, in-school, on-the-job inservice training was a significant innovative feature of the project. The fact that the project had measurable success in achieving its goals would seem to indicate that the concept of on-the-job in-service training has merit. However, the staff had difficulty arranging group meetings with teachers during and after the school day. Their experience told them that classroom demonstrations, while valuable, did not by themselves provide enough opportunity for teachers to internalize concepts or change attitudes. The staff felt that teachers must be given the opportunity to meet and interact in their peer group during the school day, in addition to classroom demonstrations, for real attitudinal change to occur.

These teacher peer-group meetings were difficult to arrange because of the classroom demands upon teachers during the school day. Some principals were cooperative and able to make these arrangements, doubling up some classes for a period of time, sending some classes to the auditorium to view a film, or through the use of teacher aides. A very few teachers were willing to stay after school on occasion.

The best success in teacher peer-group meetings was found in the Saturday workshops, which were well attended and well received. However, most teachers received some sort of incentive, such as salary credit, to attend.

The modification in this area then was on the use of teacher peer-group meetings and classroom demonstrations. The staff feels strongly that any on-the-job in-service program must feature both types of contacts to be successful, and provisions for the peer group meetings during or after the school day must be assured as part of the in-service program.

3. Recommendations for others with similar needs:

4. Requirements for successful implementation:

As mentioned above, provide for on-the-job peer group meetings of teachers throughout the school day, or provide an incentive for teachers to meet after school or Saturday.

Emphasize the use of materials and inductive techniques that deal with human relations in its broadest sense, i.e., affective learning. Emphasize self-concept building, communication and interpersonal relations before emphasizing intergroup understanding.

Involve teacher organizations in the planning and implementation of programs.

Involve the community--keep them informed--provide parent programs in the school that deal with their feelings, values and attitudes.

Provide peer group programs for administrators to deal with their feelings, values and attitudes.

N.B. The emphasis in attitudinal change is to work with small peer groups, for students, teachers, administrators and parents. It is through peer group interaction that attitudes seem to be most effectively changed. This, combined with classroom demonstration for skill building, encouragement and support, seems to be the most effective method for improving the teaching of human understanding.